

March 29, 2007 Minutes of Bigfork Land Use Advisory Committee

Members present: Phil Hanson, Clarice Ryan, Darrel Coverdell, Mary Jo Naïve, Shelley Gonzales, John Bourquin, Paul Guerrant

Chairman Bourquin called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM, and called for adoption of the agenda. Agenda was approved. M/S Hanson-Coverdell

Minutes of the March 8, 2007 Special meeting were approved as emailed. M/S Gonzales-Coverdell
The February 22, 2007 meeting was approved as corrected. M/S Guerrant-Gonzales

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

1. On April 17, 2007, Flathead County Planning staff will make a community presentation on the Flathead County Growth Plan "50 Goals". The meeting will be held at 6:00 PM at the Bethany Lutheran Church in Bigfork.
2. The Flathead County Commissioners will hold a meeting on April 9, 2007 on the Flathead County Subdivision Regulation Draft. The meeting is 9:30 to 10:30AM in the Commission hearing room.
3. John Bourquin reported he has spoken with BJ Grieve regarding the review of the Bigfork Neighborhood Plan. BJ expects to have completed the review within two weeks. John also suggested BLUAC members read the Subdivision Regulation Draft and forward comments to the Commissioners. Bourquin also noted that Grieve would address Overlay Zoning with BLUAC, which would be the path to put teeth into the Bigfork Neighborhood Plan for specific goals. Drafting would be a project for the BSC sub-committees in coordination with BLUAC.

APPLICATIONS:

A. A request by Golden Meadow Properties Inc. for Preliminary Plat approval of Park Lane Subdivision, a fifteen (15) lot commercial subdivision on 5.53 acres. Lots in the subdivision are proposed to have public water and sewer systems. The property is located at 7345 Montana Highway 35 in Bigfork.

Staff: Nicole Lopez-Stickney noted that the staff report is not complete because reports are not yet submitted by agencies involved. Some of the conditions to the application would be:

1. MDOT approval of access to Hwy 35.
2. A fifteen (15) foot pedestrian/bike path easement.
3. Landscape buffer
4. Maintenance of as much vegetation as possible. Applicant believes at least 50% of the vegetation will be removed for the development.
5. A "will serve" letter from Bigfork Water & Sewer.
6. Drainage easements and swales.
7. Weed control plan approved by the Flathead County Weed Department.

Applicant: Johna Morrison spoke on behalf of developer Dan Henderson.

Guerrant: Will parking be in the rear of businesses? A: If possible. Do you have prospective commercial buyers? A: No

Bourquin: What will be the elevation change on Lot 11? A: 16%

Coverdell: Are sidewalks required? A: Not at this time, but can be discussed. How will water run-off be handled, will there be culverts? I'm concerned about so much pavement. Also, the lots facing Hwy 35 look like a strip mall. A: We will meet DEQ has requirements for handling run-off. We hope to use vegetation in the easement.

Ryan: There is only one entrance. Believe Lot 15 could be used for a retention pond as well as an exit in case of fire.

Naive: I question the entrance with the 70 mph speed limit. There is a need for lower speed limits in this area. A: This is part of the MDOT permitting process and can be addressed.

Gonzales: The Covenants refer to minimum and maximums in accordance with the City of Kalispell? A: That is a misprint.

Morrison: The Hwy 35 access is an easement with the adjoining property to the north. As to speed limits, the State is reluctant to change speed limits but BLUAC would have influence with MDOT if they were to write a letter.

Coverdell: Lots 6 thru 10 drain to the north, toward the neighboring property. Will you consider a drainage easement adjacent to these lots? A: DEQ controls those requirements.

Gonzales: Commercial lots at Jewel Basin average ½ acre, which allows for adequate parking. I'm concerned about the size of the lots and the appearance of the lots facing Hwy 35 looking like a strip mall.

A: We are considering putting in townhomes but that would require a Conditional Use Permit. Since there is a time limitation on Conditional Use Permits, we opted to present this as a commercial application.

Naive: What would that plan look like? A: We've done an overlay and townhomes would fit the configuration.

Ryan: Are you locked in on lot configuration? A: None

Coverdell: I am having trouble envisioning the small lots, small buildings and parking. This is all going to be covered up with buildings and paving.

Bourquin: Why is there a "For Sale" sign on the fence? A: Adjoining property owner has listed for sale the 5 acres on the north. Your covenants address storage buildings and areas. Will equipment (construction type) be stored? A: Heavy equipment is not allowed.

Public Comment:

Pat Wagner: Will you sell or lease the lots? Are you aware of the number of places for rent or lease in Bigfork? A: We will sell the lots intended for professional services such as doctors and CPA's. We see the economy improving in Bigfork.

Craig Wagner: I'm concerned about sewer capacity. Are you aware of the problems there? A: Yes, we're willing to take the chance.

George Darrow: Any pedestrian/bike paths need to be part of a connecting string. If 50% of the landscaping were removed, I would hope you would make provisions for disbursing or selling the trees from this beautiful arboretum. I believe it is imperative that sewer lines are actually installed and service approved prior to sale of the lots. This is a tragic loss to the Bigfork community for the rare specimens in this arboretum are removed. I'm sorry the Bigfork community did not know about the sale in time to try to save this area.

Elna Darrow: Why is BLUAC reviewing this application with so little information? Why not wait until next month when the staff report is complete? A: The County has a statutory time line for completing the process. The application was presented to the County in January.

Sue Hanson: Do you have other undisclosed plans for this property? A: No. Why don't you apply for a Conditional Use Permit and do this right? The County issues extensions for hardship. A: We could be 2 or 3 years out to completion.

Close of Public Comment

BLUAC:

Ryan: I wish the arboretum could be utilized. The trees would be a wonderful setting for residential development.

Bourquin: This is a beautiful setting. Is there a way to compromise the plan to include more trees along Hwy 35 to make a nice buffer? A: There will be some trees used in the storm water detention area.

Gonzales: I would like to see fewer lots with buffers using landscaping and trees to block the highway noise.

Coverdell: I don't care for the small lot sizes and the amount of pavement.

Bourquin: We can look at some recommendations to the Planning Board for this application such as:

1. Lower speed limit on Hwy 35 and a turn lane.
2. A pedestrian/bike path easement
3. No water drainage on any adjacent properties.

Clarice Ryan moved the application be approved subject to all staff conditions. Motion died due to lack of second.

Phil Hanson moved to recommend denial of the application as presented noting the density, strip mall look and recommend the applicant seek a Conditional Use Permit if townhomes are the ultimate goal of the developer. Shelley Gonzales seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Flathead County Planning Board will consider this application on April 18, 2007, 6:00 PM at the Flathead County Planning & Zoning Office, 1035 First Avenue West, Kalispell.

OLD BUSINESS:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

None

PUBLIC COMMENT:

None

Meeting was adjourned at 6:00 PM; M/S Coverdell-Hanson

Sue Hanson
BLUAC Secretary